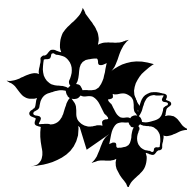


**SPRING
2005**



The FLAP

News for the Folks of Lake Accotink Park

703-569-3464

<http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/accotink/index.htm>



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Alien Invaders

Whether we know it or not, they are here making themselves at home amongst us. They are creeping through our fields. They are lurking in the back corners of our yards. They are stealthily spreading through our forests. They may have been here for years before we notice them. Then one day they have taken over so much of what once was a familiar landscape that we don't know how we managed to miss them in the first place. They are invasive plant species.

By now, most are familiar with the northern snakehead, a species of fish native to China that has been caught in several places in the Potomac River watershed. This particular non-native species, a voracious top-level predator that can grow to be almost 33 inches long, live out of water for up to three days, and feed on a variety of aquatic life ranging from fish to smaller animals to frogs, instantly struck fear into those whose livelihoods or recreational interests are tied to fishing. A species such as the snakehead has no natural predators in Virginia and could out compete and feed on native fish populations to the point where

these native populations cannot be sustained. Snakeheads could also

transmit new parasites or diseases for which native fish have no resistance. To sum up the threats posed by this species, a growing northern snakehead population could disrupt an entire food chain and end up influencing what fish live in our waterways, what animals are able to use our waterways as food sources and how people are able to recreate in the outdoors.

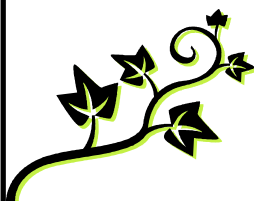
By comparison, a plant such as English ivy or common reed is not nearly as glamorous. They can't walk around. They don't have an impressive set of teeth or an insidious sounding name. In short, they don't seem like something out of a horror movie. However, they, and others like them, are no less dangerous to our local ecosystems. In fact, invasive species, including plants, are considered to be one of the greatest threats to the natural environment in the United States- second only to direct habitat destruction.

But what are "invasive plant species" exactly? Are they just weeds? An invasive plant species is a non-native plant that "displays rapid growth and spread, allowing it to establish over large areas." Their ability to reproduce rapidly and lack of natural growth inhibitors (e.g. native plant diseases or parasites, native animal species do

not use their seeds as a food source) allow almost unrestricted growth. Plants are considered to be *non-native* when they occur artificially beyond the regions in which they evolved. Many plants which are familiar to us and which are important to the United States agricultural system are non-native because they were brought here by European settlers. Corn, wheat and oats are examples of this. Therefore, a non-native species is not necessarily an invasive one. A weed is also not necessarily the same thing as an invasive plant. A weed is used to describe any plant that is considered to be "out of place" in its present location. In a tended garden, for example, a species of wildflower could be considered a weed. In the forest, however, the wildflower would not be considered as such.

Invasive plants have gained a toe-hold for a number of reasons. Plants can be spread through seeds hitching a ride in transatlantic shipments. Some plants were spread purposely before their aggressive tendencies were realized. Kudzu, for example, was imported from Japan in the 1930s and 1940s to aid in erosion control.

(continued on page 4)



Finding The Artist In You By Julie Tahan

"Push, turn and lift... Push, turn and lift..."

Is that the sound of an exercise class being led through a warm-up routine? Well, actually these instructions were heard in a recent painting class held at Lake Accotink Park. Around a large table in a quiet room tucked away

in the Visitor's Center, several women worked studiously under the encouraging watch of art instructor Janet Porter. They are applying the "one-stroke" painting technique to create floral motifs on wooden cabinet doors to transform them into decorative trays or table tops. Their expressions of

focused concentration spoke volumes about the need for people to find opportunities to express themselves, to enrich their quality of life through structured leisure pursuits, and to enjoy the company of like-minded individuals.

(Continued on page 2)

Lake Accotink Park is offering 12 NEW classes.
Check out the center insert to find the right one for you!

(Finding the Artist In You cont'd. from page 1)

Ask Barbara Gilbert of Falls Church why she takes time out of her schedule each week for One-Stroke Painting class and she'll tell you, "This is something I wanted to learn. I signed up and now, each week, I'm learning something new."

Mercedes Pendleton described her delight at discovering art classes at Lake Accotink Park. She drives to the park each week from her home in Burke without any hesitation. "I find it to be very relaxing. The price is excellent. Plus, I love crafts, and here I am creating unique things that I never thought I could do."

Echoing that sentiment was Mary Stargardt of Springfield, who chimed in with her thoughts. "It is something to do during that day that gives me a feeling of accomplishment. You learn new skills, and you come away with wonderful

things you made yourself that you can give as gifts."

All agreed that taking an art class at Lake Accotink Park is a great way to meet nice people and work together on rewarding projects. Despite its peaceful woodland setting and ample open space, Lake Accotink Park is easily accessible from just about anywhere.

Located just outside the Beltway in Springfield, the park can be reached by taking Braddock Road east to a right on Backlick Road to another right on Highland Street to Accotink Park Road (right again!) to the park entrance on the left. Or, from Old Keene Mill Road, take Hanover Street north to a left on Highland to Accotink Park Road to the park entrance on the left.

Spring art classes at Lake Accotink Park begin March 26th. Choose from a variety of topics, including one-stroke painting, water color painting, oil painting, pastel

painting, and acrylics. And for kids who like to draw, look for Discover Nature with Me, which meets Saturday mornings and ventures outdoors to observe flowers, trees, and other treasures of nature. For days, times, fees, class descriptions, and registration information, see the Spring Classes insert in this issue of the FLAP.

Free Art Seminar



For a sample of what Lake Accotink Park art classes are like, register now for a FREE Art In Nature Workshop on Saturday April 30. From 9 am - 1 pm become acquainted with color and drawing techniques led by Roberta Vittoria. Art supplies are not included in the workshop. A supply list will be provided prior to class. Space is limited, so please register in advance by calling 703-569-0285.

Check-It-Out:

Catch up with the new and exciting things going on at Lake Accotink Park!

Have you heard... Lake Accotink Park will stock fighting rainbow trout every other week starting Friday February 11th? Season passes are \$35 for those 16-59 and \$29 for those 11-15 or 60 and older. The main office is open for pass sales from 9:30 am - 6 pm. Bait and tackle will also be sold. Passes and bait and tackle can be bought from the marina on weekends. The season runs through April 24th. Passes are also good at Lake Fairfax Park. Lake Fairfax Park will begin stocking February 18th and will stock on weeks Lake Accotink Park does not.

And ... Lake Accotink Park will be hosting a new Springfield Days event? Saturday June 4th, the first annual Heritage Day will be held to celebrate local history. Groups representing Native American, railroad and Civil War themes will be present. Admission is \$4 per person 16 and older and \$2 per person for those ages 4-15.

Have you noticed.... The construction around the large lake shelter? The shelter will now have a matching retaining wall on both sides. This will help keep the surface around the shelter level by preventing mulch from washing down the hill when it rains.

Make sure you check out... the Braddock Nights schedule, which will be available in May. In addition to free concerts on Friday nights, the series will include several outdoor movies. Titles will be announced closer to event dates.



Are you looking to enhance your college résumé, have fun and make some extra money this summer?



Lake Accotink Park
is looking to add diverse, hardworking, professional individuals to its Marina Team for Summer 2005.



If you are interesting in applying, call 703-569-3464 or email lee.shenefiel@fairfaxcounty.gov for more information or stop by the main office to pick up an application.

Meet Lake Accotink Park's Summer Camp Directors!

Lake Accotink Park is pleased to introduce to you two more talented team members: Ashleigh Eakin and Stacey Langsner. Eakin and Langsner are Lake Accotink Park's summer camp directors. This hard-working duo has a combined eight years summer camp experience. As camp directors, they manage the organization, planning, networking, and public relations tasks associated with the summer camp program. This means they are responsible for planning weekly itineraries chock full of fun and engaging activities to promote character development and environmental awareness, communicating with parents, training and supervising counselors and ensuring Lake Accotink Park's camps meet and exceed state licensing requirements. When you receive written reminders from Outdoor Fun Camp (now Outdoor Adventure Camp) or listen to your child rave about an activity, it is a sure bet at least one of these two were behind it.

Eakin and Langsner both enjoy working at Lake Accotink Park because of the unique camp programs and beautiful setting. The park has facilities, "that allow us to feature exciting outdoor activities you can't find at other camps; you won't find kids learning skills like orienteering, stream monitoring, enjoying an afternoon on the water, or bringing their dogs to camp anywhere else!" Langsner says. "I love being able to provide children with new and different experiences!" Eakin agrees with this.

"We do a variety of activities...The campers go canoeing, orienteering, fishing, hiking, rock wall climbing...and that's just the beginning." It is this commitment to provide campers with a meaningful, unique and quality camp experience that both children and parents can appreciate that drives this pair.

Eakin and Langsner are already excitedly preparing for next summer. This year, Outdoor Adventure Camp will have a greater focus on the environment and character development, but will still include many of the most popular and fun activities from previous summers. Campers will learn more about conservation and ways to care for and appreciate nature around them. Eakin says, "We think it is important to the development of each child to emphasize these character traits not only at home or school, but even in play. We not only want to share with them their importance, but we also want to show them by example, which is why we take great care in hiring quality camp counselors." Eakin and Langsner are busy recruiting and interviewing new counselors. They are also developing an orienteering program and lining up exciting new guest speakers and demonstrators. Preparations for Doggone Fun Camp, Tennis Camp, and Junior Stewardship Camp are also in the works. They believe a major component of their jobs as coordinators is to make the camp program better every year and are working hard to accomplish this.



Langsner is a rising senior at James Madison University in Harrisonburg, Virginia where she is studying psychology and music. She says, "I have learned so much from the staff, campers, and parents I have met throughout my time at Lake Accotink. As a budding psychologist and future parent, the experience has been invaluable for me!" She hopes the campers and parents enjoy attending and observing the camps as much as she enjoys putting them together.



Eakin is a rising senior at George Mason University in Fairfax, Virginia. She intends to major in business with a concentration in accounting and minor in geography and travel and tourism. Her favorite thing about working at Lake Accotink Park is being able to work outdoors with Lake Accotink Park's staff. "I have never had a better work environment," she says. Eakin hopes her evident enthusiasm for what for others would just be a "summer job" is passed onto the campers with whom she works and helps create a wonderful summer experience.

If you have questions for the camp directors regarding Lake Accotink Park's summer camps, messages can be left at 703-569-0285.

Save-The-Bay Workday



What: A day dedicated to cleaning up Lake Accotink Park, Accotink Creek, and Brookfield Park.

When: April 2, 9 am - noon

Where: Meet at the Lake Accotink Park marina

Dress for the weather!

Lunch will be provided for all!

SPRING MARINA HOURS

BOAT RENTALS, CAROUSEL, AND
MINIATURE GOLF

~ OPENS SATURDAY MAY 7TH! ~



MAY 7 - JUNE 26: OPEN WEEKENDS ONLY
11 AM - 8 PM



JUNE 27 - LABOR DAY: OPEN DAILY
11 AM - 8 PM

(Alien Invaders continued from page 1)

English ivy and Japanese honeysuckle were used in gardens. Land that has been disturbed either from natural or manmade rea-

sons make it easier for invasive species to establish themselves. Seeds of invasive species can often lie dormant in the ground for years before the opportunity to take root affords itself. Invasive species can be difficult to control, in part, for this reason.

Unrestricted growth of a single species of plant can have a devastating impact on native plant communities. Invasive plant species often reproduce and grow faster than native species. This characteristic can allow them to create dense one-species plant stands. Kudzu is a common sight along East Coast highways. The vines obscure the trees on which they grow so that all that can be seen is a great green blob of vines. All plants beneath them are being or have been choked out from lack of sunlight, nutrients, and the shear weight of the vines themselves. Animals and insects who once fed on and used these other plants for shelter now have one less food and shelter source. If their population is reduced, animals which feed on them are impacted as well.

Dense growths of invasive plants can also lead to the spread of non-native diseases and increase the spread of parasites

among native plant and animal populations. Invasive plants often grow more densely than native plants forcing animals into closer contact with them. Parasites have an easier time finding animal hosts when animals are forced to brush against leaves.



English ivy has tiny roots that dig into tree trunks eventually killing the tree.

Invasive species are a serious threat to our parks and open spaces. Not only do they visually change our landscape, they force out native plants on which birds, animals and insects depend for food and shelter. These impacts dramatically illustrate the interconnectedness of our natural world.

Lake Accotink Park is not immune to these problems. A common source of invasive species is from yard waste. Plants

such as English ivy, which are common in gardens, do not need a seed to grow. New plants can sprout from clippings. Other invasive plants threatening the park are Japanese honeysuckle, purple loosestrife, common reed, and kudzu.

How You Can Help:

- Landscape with native plants. Contact Green Springs Garden Park at 703-642-5173 for information on where you can purchase locally grown native plants.
- Control potentially invasive plants in your yard (e.g. forsythia, English ivy, etc.) by pruning and other growth control measures.
- NEVER dump yard waste (or anything else) on park property. In fact, this is illegal and called encroachment. Yard waste can contain seeds and plant clippings that can produce then grow on parkland.
- Notify land managers if you believe invasive plants are growing on managed property.

Source: "Weeds Gone Wild." December 2000. Online. Available: www.nps.gov/alien/plants/bkgd.htm

Thanks for Asking!

Why is there so much trash in the lake?



This is a question park staff is frequently asked year-round. It is usually followed by, "Why don't you do something about it?" Park staff members agree it is an unsightly and disgusting problem, but it has no easy solution. Part of the issue has to do with Lake Accotink Park's location in the Accotink Creek watershed. A watershed is an area of land that drains into a single body of water like a river, creek, lake, etc. Approximately 30.5 square miles of the Accotink Creek watershed drain into Lake Accotink. Lake Accotink is not just the recipient of excess water; everything on our roads, yards and open spaces that can be washed away by water also ends up in the lake.

A major source of litter is our storm drains, those mysterious openings that lead

under our streets and sidewalks. Many citizens think these lead to sewers and so can be used for dumping yard waste or other trash. Storm drains do NOT lead to sewers. They lead straight to the nearest creek. When we dump in storm drains, we dump in our water supply because that is ultimately where storm drains lead. If you live in the central Fairfax area, everything dumped in storm drains ends up in Lake Accotink first.

Six major commuter arteries crisscross the Accotink Creek Watershed: I-66, Route 50, Little River Turnpike, Braddock Road and I-495. Consider the volume of traffic these roads carry. Even if only a fraction of these drivers litter, it adds up quickly. This is another source of the litter in the lake.

When it rains, it is like flushing a toilet. Everything on the ground that can be washed away is washed into the nearest storm drain. Everything in the storm drain is washed into the closest creek or stream. What is in the creek or stream is then carried to the next largest body of water: Lake Accotink. Lake Accotink, via the lower part of the Accotink Creek, flows into the Potomac River and eventually ends up in the Chesapeake Bay. On the bright side, Lake Accotink filters out a lot of trash and sedimentation from eroding stream banks before it gets to the Bay. The consequence, however, is that Lake Accotink visitors are forced to look at it.

(Continued on page 5)

(Thanks For Asking continued from page 4)

The trash is most noticeable in the winter time. During the winter, Lake Accotink Park has a staff of seven. Three of these staff members have maintenance responsibilities. Trash collecting is one of their many responsibilities, which is made challenging when the lake freezes and new trash continues to be swept into the lake every day by the simple fact that the creek continues to flow. It is easier to stay on the top of the trash during the spring and summer when Lake Accotink's marina is staffed and the lake is not frozen. Even then, however, it is impossible to remove every single piece of trash from the lake. Trash is collected by hand with telescoping nets from the seawall or from a rowboat. Lake Accotink staff apologize for its unsightliness and do their best to keep up with it as much as possible. And, as always, thanks for asking.



January 12



January 14 after a heavy rainstorm.
Note the increase in trash and debris.

There are several ways you can help.

- Don't litter or dump anything (ever) in storm drains. If you already don't, share this information with a neighbor.
- Come to the next Trail Watch orientation on Sunday February 20th from 2-4pm. Help be the "eyes and ears" of the park. Learn how you can report on trail conditions and violations of Park Authority regulations, including dumping and encroachment, with a minimal time commitment. If you cannot attend, call 703-569-0285 or email lee.shenefiel@fairfaxcounty.gov for more information.
- Come out and help clean up Lake Accotink park and the Accotink Creek at the Save-The-Bay Workday on Saturday April 2 from 9 am - noon. Trash bags and gloves will be provided as will a free lunch to all volunteers.

For Pets:

Annual
Spring Bonnet Contest, Bone
Hunt And Photos With The
Spring Bunny



Saturday March 19, 3 pm

\$6 registration fee per pet

(fee includes all activities and keepsake photo on disk)

Bring your furry family members to partake in this traditional springtime celebration. Dress them in their finest bonnets and hunt for treats in the bone yard. Top off the fun with a visit and digital photos with the Spring Bunny.

To Register: Call 703-569-0285 to pay with Visa or Master Card. Or mail check with name and program title made out to FCPA to Lake Accotink Park, 7500 Accotink Park Road, Springfield, Virginia 22150.

For Children:

Annual
Spring Egg Hunt



Saturday March 19, noon-3 pm

\$8 registration fee per child

(fee includes egg hunt and keepsake photo on disk)

Children hunt for treat-filled eggs and have their photos taken on a disk with the Spring Bunny. Remember to bring your own basket.

Calendar of Events:

Advanced registration is required. Please call 703-569-3464 or TTY 703-569-5200.

Sunset Cruise

Admire the sunset and relax as you cruise the beautiful shoreline of Lake Accotink.

An interpretive history of Lake Accotink park and the area is included.

\$5 per participant (16 +), \$3 (under 16)

April cruises begin at 7 pm; May cruises begin at 7:30 pm; June cruises begin at 8 pm

Dates: Saturday April 16, Saturday May 7, Saturday June 18 (age 16+)



Nature Night Hike

Join us for an evening stroll under a full moon as we try to encounter some of the “nightlife” in Lake Accotink Park.

\$5 per adult, \$3 for children under 16

Dates: Friday March 25 or Saturday March 26, 7:30-9 pm

Friday April 22 or Saturday April 23, 8:30-10 pm

Friday May 20 or Saturday May 21, 8:30-10 pm

Friday June 24 or Saturday June 25, 8:30-10 pm



Dog Day Afternoon (Humans ages 8 & up; dogs all ages)

Treat your canine companion to a special cruise aboard Lake Accotink Park’s pontoon boat.

\$5 per adults, \$3 for children 8-15 (please no children under 8); One dog per adult

Dates: Sunday April 17 or Sunday May 15, 2-3 pm



Go Fish (Ages 7 and up)

Join us for a morning of fishing and fun. Learn the wildlife-friendly catch-and-release fishing technique. Find out what species of fish live in the lake and how to protect their environment *and* your drinking water! Safety and environmental issues are also covered.

Bring your own pole and tackle; *barbless hooks only*.

\$10 per adult, \$8 per child under 16

Dates: Saturday March 5, Sunday March 6 or Sunday April 3, 9-11 am



Up a Creek with a Paddle (Ages 10 and up)

At the place where the Accotink Creek flows into the park’s 55-acre lake, waterfowl and marsh plants thrive. Join us for a morning of exploration and discovery of the beautiful wetlands of Lake Accotink. Morning snack provided. Safety and canoeing tips covered.

Children under 16 must be accompanied by an adult.



\$15 per person

Dates: Saturday April 9 or Saturday May 14, 9-noon

Specialty Events:

Spring Egg Hunt

Children hunt for treat-filled eggs and have your photo taken on a disk with the Spring Bunny. Bring your own basket

\$8 per child includes photo on disk and egg hunt

Date: Saturday March 19, noon-3 pm (Rain date March 26)



Calendar of Events (continued)

Pet Photos with Spring Bunny and Spring Bonnet Contest

Bring your furry family members to partake in this traditional celebration of Spring. Dress them in their finest bonnets and hunt for treats in the bone yard. Top off the fun by visiting with the bunny.



\$6 per pet includes digital photo on disk, bonnet contest and bone hunt

Date: Saturday March 19, 3 pm (Rain date March 26)

Save-the-Bay Work Day

Be part of the solution for pollution! Lend a hand to clean up Lake Accotink and the streams that feed into it. Lunch will be provided. Please bring your own gloves. Meet at marina rain or shine.

Saturday April 2, 9-noon



Cardboard Boat Orientation and Workshop

At this essential workshop, you will meet with former Cardboard Boat Regatta contestants and learn tips that will maximize your chances of entering a race-worthy vessel in this year's Regatta.



\$7 per person, \$4 per person for groups of five or more

Saturday April 30, 10-noon

Mother's Day Cruises

Treat Mom to a special day at Lake Accotink! Cruise the shoreline while listening to an interpretive history of the park and surrounding area.

\$3.50 per mother, \$7 per other adults, \$4 per child

Choose from the following times: 11 am, 1 pm, 3 pm, 5 pm, 6 pm

Date: Sunday May 8



Heritage Day

NEW! Music, food, and family fun are served up at this new event which features exhibits, crafts, and living history displays focused on Native American, railroad, Civil War, and local historical themes.



\$4 admission fee for ages 16 and older, \$2 admission fee for ages 4-15

Date: Saturday June 4, 11-7 pm

Cardboard Boat Regatta

Get in a great tradition! Cheer on regatta participants as they sink or float in their cardboard boats.

Contestants: \$10 pre-registration fee, \$20 registration fee day of event

\$4 parking fee per vehicle

Date: Sunday June 5 (Races begin at 2 pm)



Registration Information:

By Phone: Visa or Master Card reservations only

Please call 703-569-0285 or TTY 703-569-5200

By Mail: Send a check made payable to "FCPA" with participant's name, address, telephone number, and program title to

7500 Accotink Park Road, Springfield, Virginia 22150

Refunds: Only issued if class/program is canceled

Lake Accotink Park Summer Camps:

Outdoor Adventure Camp

Ages 6-13

Sessions:	9am-4pm	6/27-7/08	\$270
	9am-4pm	7/11-7/22	\$299
	9am-4pm	7/25-8/05	\$299
	9am-4pm	8/08-8/19	\$299

Tennis Camp

Ages 6-9

Sessions:	9am-12pm	7/11-7/15	\$104
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Ages 10-13

	9am-12pm	7/18-7/22	\$104
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Ages 6-9

	9am-12pm	7/25-7/29	\$104
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Ages 10-13

	9am-12pm	8/01-8/05	\$104
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Junior Stewardship Camp

Ages 8-10

Sessions:	9am-4pm	8/01-8/05	\$173
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Ages 11-13

Sessions:	9am-4pm	8/08-8/12	\$173
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Doggone Fun Camp

Ages 8-13

Sessions:	9am-4pm	7/11-7/15	\$145
	9am-4pm	7/18-7/22	\$145
	9am-4pm	7/25-7/29	\$145

Munchkin Movers Sports Camp

Ages 4-6

Sessions:	9am-12pm	6/06-6/10	\$113
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	9am-12pm	7/11-7/15	\$113
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	9am-12pm	7/25-7/29	\$113
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	9am-12pm	8/08-8/12	\$113
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How To Register:

On-line: www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktakes.htm

By Phone: Call 703-449-8639 (automated) or 703-222-4664 (operator assisted M-F, 9-4)

By Mail: Download registration form from www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks and mail to:
FCPA/Parktates, PO Box 4606, Fairfax, Virginia 22038-4606

By Fax: Download registration form from www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks and fax to:
703-631-2004

Fairfax County Park Authority

Lake Accotink Park



7500 Accotink Park Road
Springfield, Virginia 22150

Phone: 703-569-0285

TTY: 703-569-5200

www.lakeaccotinkpark.com

Park Management:

Tawny Hammond, Park Manager

Julie Tahan, Assistant Manager

Lee Ann Shenefiel, Operations Manager

Axel Boy, Evening Supervisor

Ed Miller, Grounds Supervisor

For FLAP comments or suggestions,
please email:

Tawny.Hammond@fairfaxcounty.gov



ADA Accommodations: Fairfax County is committed to giving all citizens equal access to recreation and leisure opportunities. In keeping with that policy and the Americans with Disabilities Act, reasonable accommodations are provided to individuals with disabilities in all Park Authority programs, services, and facilities. ADA accommodations include sign interpreters, alternative information formats, program modifications and inclusion support. Contact the ADA Specialist at 703-324-8563 or (TTY) (703)803-3354 for additional information.